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was able also to dispel the supposed incognito of the person who had ordered the Requiem, and the assumption that the copy handed to him had been lost, by relating a curious little episode that had occurred many years before, and in which he was himself personally concerned. The following is a translation of his account:—

"It is further in my power here to declare who the individual was that gave Mozart the commission to compose the Requiem; but as he wished to remain unknown I cannot venture to publish his name. It is, moreover, unnecessary to do so. The fact is positive; and suffice it that it is to his generosity that we owe the existence of this master work. I may, however, state that, when it came to this individual's knowledge that the work was not entirely Mozart's, but that he died before it was finished, he sent the copy, in Süssmayer's handwriting, furnished to him, to his agent [Dr. Sortschen], a very eminent advocate in Vienna, with instructions to obtain further information about it. The widow was questioned, but she requested me and Herr von Nissen (whom she afterwards married), who were best informed on the subject, to see the advocate, which we did willingly. The score was laid before us. I pointed out which parts had Mozart and which Süssmayer for their author, and the advocate wrote down everything that was said to him. The affair was concluded, the copy returned, and the unknown owner satisfied."

Although Stadler concealed, in his pamphlet, the name of the mysterious personage here alluded to, he communicated it in a letter which he privately wrote to Weber, and in which he apologized for not having communicated his remarks directly to him, in consequence of not having received his circular invitation till after he had adopted the other form of publication. The letter was signed, *Inimicus causæ, amicus personæ*, and was published by Weber, with the other letters, in the *Cecilia*, when, of course, the long-sustained incognito came to an end. The owner of the Requiem was a certain Count Walsegg, of whom and of whose proceedings in regard to the work much more was soon afterwards revealed.

(To be continued).

MUSICAL PITCH.

AMONGST the innumerable articles upon this important question, we have met with none more thoroughly earnest and conscientious than that by Mr. John Hullah, in the April number of *Good Words*. Discussing the subject in its purely practical bearing, both upon executants and auditors, his remarks are rendered doubly valuable by the evidence which they bear of being the result of long experience and acute observation. We regret that the inexorable demands upon our space must limit us to a few extracts from the testimony of so able a counsel. After defining what musical pitch really is, Mr. Hullah says:

"It is asserted on the one hand that, for about 250 years past, pitch has been rising—gradually, insensibly at any particular moment, but as certainly without intermission—inexorably, so to speak. That this rise now approximates in amount to a minor third;—in other words, that the A of to-day is nearly identical with the C of the seventeenth century. Moreover, that this elevation has been attained with an accelerated velocity,—that the pitch has within only thirty years risen a semitone, and that it still continues to rise. That this rise, which has been attended with no advantage to any class of musical performers, is in the highest degree inconvenient and distre sing to one class; and that the public are every way losers by a state of things under which, possibly instrumental, certainly vocal performance, is deteriorated in sonority and sweetness."

In speaking of Mr. Sims Reeves's wholesome protest against the present extravagantly high pitch, our author very naturally expresses his surprise that, with the honourable exception of Madlle. Nilsson, no vocalist should have come forward to aid in the reform of a pernicious system under which so many have notoriously suffered for years. Then come some important remarks upon the manner in which this question affects the general public, which we quote entire:

"But, it may be said—it has been said already—what has the public to do with all this? So long as we (the public) are entertained, what is it to us that the physical powers of Mr. A., Mrs. B., and Miss C., are tasked to the utmost, that the work which should be pleasant and easy is (from whatever cause) disagreeable and

difficult to them, or that their careers in consequence are now and then brought to an untimely end?

Assuming, for the sake of argument, that the public cares as little about the comfort and welfare of those who minister to its pleasure as some who profess to represent it would have us believe, the public has at least an interest in the preservation of its own property. If anything be public property, it is surely the voice of a public singer; and the voice of a singer, public or private, will not long maintain its strength or sweetness if it be mis-used—made to do work for which it is unfit. Rome was not built in a day; and a singer is the (often tardy) fruit of a long course of cultivation. Is it not Colley Cibber who accounts for the rarity of actresses eminent in youthful parts, in the all but impossibility that a woman should acquire skill enough to do justice to them, before her youth is over and her beauty gone? Sentiment apart, it is difficult to conceive anything in which the public could have a deeper interest than the preservation of the instrument—never, alas! to be replaced by another—of one whom the sunshine of its own favour has ripened into that rare product of nature, art, and circumstance—a great singer."

The "Oratorio Concerts," conducted by Mr. Joseph Barnby, in which the "diapason normal" was first tried, are thus commented upon.

"No musician who was present at the first of these can have failed to have been struck by the excellent *timbre* or quality, especially of the soprano and tenor voices, as well as by a certain air of ease characterizing the delivery of all the vocalists, principal or other. This was less apparent later in the performance than at the beginning; not because the ear got used to it, but because, as the temperature rose, so did the pitch with it; and so will it always, till our public rooms are better ventilated. By the end of the first part of the concert it was somewhat higher than that recommended by the Society of Arts; by the end of the second part, much higher. This rise was, no doubt, accelerated by the organ, which, being elevated some ten feet above the highest part of the orchestra, luxuriated in a temperature as many degrees higher, and therefore inevitably kept the lead, in sharpness, of all its brother instruments. Nor are these all the disadvantages under which Mr. Barnby's experiment has had to be tried. The wind instruments—such of them as were new—were already adapted to the new state of things. Not so the stringed instruments—all of them old. A sudden declension of pitch must for them be attended always with some loss of sonority. Instruments of this class will not, at a moment's notice, adapt themselves to a pitch other than that to which they have been long used—or mis-used."

To prepare for the inevitable rise in the pitch of the instruments during a Concert, Mr. Hullah proposes to start from as low a number of vibrations as may not be positively inconvenient; and seems to favour the adoption of the "Theoretical Pitch" of C, at 512 vibrations per second. Our opinion upon this subject has been already fully expressed in these columns; and it is unnecessary for us therefore to re-open the matter. After mentioning some of the difficulties which may arise in the carrying out of this reform, the article concludes with the following sensible observations.

"But we have all of us seen greater difficulties than these tided over. Let it be shown that this is no mere personal question—no matter of convenience to particular performers, great or small, old or young—but, on the contrary, a question affecting the pleasure, and, as Handel would have said, "improvement," of all who love music, and, as a consequence, feel kindly towards its practitioners, and somehow or other, sooner or later—the sooner the better—it will be carried. Where there's a will there's a way."

ROYAL ITALIAN OPERA.

BELLINI's opera, *Norma*, inaugurated the season at this establishment on the 30th March, Mdle. Tietjens singing the part of Norma with much effect, although evidently suffering from a severe cold. Signor Mongini was an excellent Pollio; and Mdle. Sinico, who is always welcome in whatever part she undertakes, was more than usually successful in the ill-used Adalgisa. *Rigoletto* has also been given, in the heroine of which Mdle. Vanzini considerably strengthened the favourable impression which she made last year. In *Fidelio*, Mdle. Tietjens appeared completely to have recovered her voice; and sang the music from beginning to end with unflagging vigour. Signor Bulterini, although perhaps scarcely equal to the part of *Florestan*, displayed very excellent qualities, especially in the trying concerted pieces, where indeed, the real musical training of an artist is often most severely tested. The "Prisoners' chorus" was given with a decision and power which we have rarely heard equalled on the Italian stage, and received by the audience with a coldness which speaks but little for the musical "pro-

gress," of which we hear so much, but see so little. The orchestra, under the skilful *bâton* of Signor Arditi, played the *Leonora* overture so magnificently as to cause an enthusiastic demand for its repetition, which demand was acceded to so promptly as to prove that reforms which are gradually making their way at St. James's Hall, have not yet crept into so conservative an institution as the Royal Italian Opera. No novelty has been given during the month; but some of our favourite singers have returned to us, and been received with the usual cordial welcome. Mdlle. Ilma de Murska has been singing in *Linda di Chamouni*, with even more than her usual success; and has also strengthened the cast of *Il Flauto Magico*, by undertaking the exacting music of the "Queen of night." Mdlle. Scalchi, Signor Naudin, and Signor Ciampi have also appeared; and the fusion of the two companies is already beginning to be attempted in casting the operas. Let us hope that this laudable attempt may not be frustrated by any caprice or petty jealousies on the part of the artists.

CRYSTAL PALACE.

THE excellent Saturday Concerts at this establishment closed on the 17th ult., to the great regret of the many who have now learned to consider these performances as amongst the most advanced of the day, not only as to the execution of the works, but as to the immense number of unfamiliar compositions constantly included in the programmes. On the 3rd ult., a most interesting feature in the Concert was the *Prometheus* music of Beethoven, which in its entire state has, we believe, never before been performed in England. The overture is well known; but the dance music—some (especially that written for Signora Casentini) elaborated to the highest degree—is perfectly charming. A March, performed during a dance of Bacchus, and the Finale to the work are also notable examples of how a great genius can invest even a ballet with an interest which not even many years of neglect can effectually destroy. At the last Concert of the series a very good performance of Beethoven's *Choral Symphony* was given; and Herr Reinecke played with much effect his pianoforte Concerto in F sharp minor.

THE ORATORIO CONCERTS.

HAYDN'S *Creation* was performed at the fourth of these concerts on the 21st ult., the principal vocalists being Madame Lemmens-Sherrington, Miss Annie Sinclair, Mr. Sims Reeves, Mr. A. Byron (who replaced Mr. Montem Smith, absent from indisposition), and Mr. Lewis Thomas. The bright music allotted to the principal soprano in this Oratorio is admirably suited to display the best qualities of Madame Sherrington's voice and style; and it is scarcely necessary to say that the whole of her part was given throughout with a purity and truth of expression thoroughly in accordance with the intention of the composer; "With verdure clad" of course exciting the largest share of applause; but many bits (the soprano in the trio and chorus, "The Lord is great," for instance) being infinitely more perfect as an artistic realisation of the simple beauty of the music. Mr. Sims Reeves gave the solos which fell to his share with the utmost expression; "In native worth," especially being a model of truthful vocalisation; and we are glad to record that, as usual, he declined the encore which, as a matter of course, was proffered to him. Miss Sinclair again gave evidence of a good voice and careful training in the solo, with chorus, "The marvellous work;" and Mr. Byron acquitted himself exceedingly well of a rather thankless task—so well, indeed, as to make us hope that he may eventually prove useful as an oratorio singer when not called upon, as in this case, to supply the place of a brother artist. In the bass music, Mr. Lewis Thomas was really excellent; the fine song "Now Heaven in fullest glory shone," and the well-known "Rolling in foaming billows," being delivered with marvellous power and earnestness. As a whole, we consider that this was the best performance yet given by the choir under Mr. Barnby's direction. Whether the members have dis-

covered that perfection is only to be attained by rigidly yielding to one controlling mind, and that mind the conductor's, we cannot say; but certain it is that we scarcely remember to have heard Haydn's beautiful choruses go so uniformly well. Not only were "The heavens are telling," "Achieved is the glorious work," and other well known pieces given with extraordinary precision, and due attention to gradations of tone, but in all cases where the choir was united with the solo voices, the delicacy with which the choral parts were woven in was perfectly charming; and we trust that Mr. Barnby and the members of his vocal corps duly appropriated to themselves a considerable portion of the applause with which these "numbers" were greeted. The orchestra was excellent; and Mr. Barnby conducted with that care and judgment which he has shown throughout this series of concerts.

MISS AGNES ZIMMERMANN'S CONCERT.

THE second *Soirée Musicale* took place at the Hanover Square Rooms, on the 13th ult., when an excellent programme of chamber music was provided. Bach's Sonata, in A major, for pianoforte and violin, was a real treat to all lovers of his music, which although characteristic of a past age, seems to give unqualified pleasure in the present; a fact proved not only by the applause with which the composition was received, but by the real interest which it excited during its performance. It was played to perfection by Miss Zimmermann and Herr Deichmann. Mendelssohn's posthumous Pianoforte Sonata, in B flat (Op. 106), most severely tested the powers of the Concert-giver; but we need scarcely say that Miss Zimmermann was in every respect fully equal to the task. The first movement, especially, was dashed off with a vigour and impetuosity which left nothing to be desired; and in the quaint and fanciful *Scherzo* she displayed the utmost neatness and elasticity of touch. Miss Zimmermann also played (with Herr Daubert) three "Morceaux," for pianoforte and violoncello, by Rubinstein, which, although cleverly written, and excellently performed, created but little interest. The Concert concluded with Schumann's Quartett, in E flat (Op. 47), for pianoforte, violin, viola, and violoncello, a thoroughly representative work, which was finely rendered by Miss Zimmermann, Herr Deichmann, Mr. Zerbini, and Herr Daubert, and warmly received by the audience. Mr. Joseph Barnby's Choir gave several part-songs during the evening, amongst the most effective of which were Macfarren's "Sands of Dee," Sullivan's "Joy to the victors," and two of Miss Zimmermann's composition, "Lordly Gallants" (performed for the first time) a highly meritorious work, and a Fairy song; "Come, follow, follow me," which was enthusiastically encored.

MR. HENRY LESLIE'S CONCERTS.

A VERY excellent Concert, chiefly composed of choral music, was given on the 22nd ult., which was well attended. The madrigals and part-songs selected for the occasion were rendered in that careful and artistic manner which alone can reveal the beauty of these compositions, and were thoroughly enjoyed by an audience, evidently attracted by the legitimate claims of the choir. A new part-song, by Mr. Leslie, "Arise, sweet love," was received with well deserved applause; and the "Bacchus" chorus, from *Antigone*, also produced a marked effect, although a composition scarcely perhaps admissible into a Concert without an orchestra. Mr. Sims Reeves sang "The Pilgrim of love," and the "Requital," with his usual effect; and gave, for the first time in London, Brinley Richards's "Cambrian Plume," which elicited an unanimous encore, and will no doubt seize hold of the loyal and patriotic sympathies of the public with the same irresistible force as "God bless the Prince of Wales" has already done. Miss Ada Jackson was eminently successful in both her songs; and Mr. Wehli satisfied the admirers of the "brilliant" school by his pianoforte performance.